

The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Shop Association Ltd

Notes of Committee meeting held on 7 July 2025 at Cruck Cottage

Present: Committee members - Peter Head (Chair), Richard Killer, Chris Miller, Jo Neudegg and Lesley Wilcox (Secretary).

1. Apologies for absence: Peter Martin (Treasurer).

2. Notes of last meeting on 14.4.25: approved.

3. Treasurer's Report

Peter M had e-mailed the accounts for both May and June from holiday – many thanks to Peter. June had produced a margin of £873 with all categories in profit but this was before expenses for repairs to one of the chillers, printing of the leaflets re both Steve Smith's and Eve Badcock's retirements, a new fire extinguisher and the alterations to the top step into the shop. This had produced a net loss for the month of £426 but a profit for the year to date of £1,566.

4. Replacement Treasurer

Disappointingly, there had been no response to the call for a volunteer to replace Peter M when he moves. It was agreed that the monthly reports he produces have been extremely useful in informing decision-making and that, ideally, the same level of detail would be useful in the future. Ideally it would be helpful for Peter to continue in post until the end of the FY (end of October) even if he had moved by that time.

Jo had spoken to a firm of accountants, Edwards and Keeping, in Dorchester. They had advised that the end of year accounts for submission to the FCA had to be prepared by an accountant with the appropriate licence and that they would charge around £1,000 (plus VAT) to do this. At that level, it was clearly not feasible to have professional paid help on a monthly basis as well.

E&K suggested that we consider using volunteer effort to populate software which could then produce monthly accounts and data. They recommended either of two packages, one of which is free to Nat West business customers. E&K could provide training and support at £65 (plus VAT) ph.

Reports are also available from Square which Jo can access.

Richard had advice from the Plunkett Foundation. They had also thought that much of the information could be obtained from Square and that volunteer resources could be used for all tasks other than the end-of-year accounts.

It was agreed that we could not take this much further without Peter M's advice and views. A further meeting will be arranged asap just to discuss this issue.

5. Replacement Postmistress

The volunteer who had come forward had submitted her application to the PO and started local training. Once the PO has confirmed the appointment we can make an announcement to the community.

It was agreed to hold a tea party in the village hall to celebrate Eve's retirement. A date will be set shortly.

6. Step into the shop

The work had been completed and produced a good improvement to the access. A note of appreciation had been received from a member of the community.

7. Maintenance Plan

The planned meeting with the Parish Council rep had been cancelled by him and a further date would be set.

8. Volunteers and Operations

Jo and Lesley are continuing to cover weekends. 2 new counter staff had joined the team.

It had previously been agreed to hold a gathering of the volunteers to show appreciation for their time and effort. However, this would be paused pending the outcome of the Parish Council's similar thoughts. See item 12.

9. Security

Richard and Lesley had met with a PCSO and a CPO to discuss what steps, if any, we might take to increase security in the shop and PO, whether from theft or undesirable behaviour. They had discussed the way to deal with any undesirable behaviour, ie not to confront the individual but to ask them to leave. Realistically, the police would only attend in the event of physical threat and 999 call. They suggested the installation of CCTV. Richard had put this suggestion to the PO's Area Manager who had no objections but said that the PO would not fund it as they considered the current security arrangements for the PO to be adequate.

It was agreed to install a panic button – Richard will look into this.

10. Shop phone

There is now only one handset in the shop and PO. This is held in the shop at weekends and has stayed charged until Monday when it is returned to the PO.

11. Fire Services contract

Agreed to move to using Defender Fire Protection based in Weymouth. Chris to take this forward.

12. Working Group with other Parish organisations

This initiative is being led by the Parish Council. Following the initial meetings of the group one area of agreement is that a more collaborative approach to local events would be beneficial and create an opportunity for more people to get involved in event planning and preparation. The initial thinking is to hold one major village event each year, eg either Open Gardens or a Village Fete. Both events are important fundraising events for the Village Hall and Parish Church but could also provide opportunities for other local groups and charities to raise much needed funds. Also, to thank everyone who volunteers in the parish, the PC may arrange an Annual Garden Party.

13. Any Other Business

- i. There had been concern about the ivy growing up the front face of the building damaging brickwork and going into the roof so it has been cut and will be removed when it dies.
- ii. There was concern about the temperature in the shop during the current hot weather. Whilst this had not caused significant spoiling of stock various ideas to deal with this were discussed but no satisfactory solution found. An air conditioning unit would be too big and probably cost more to run than the cost of any stock lost.

14. Dates of next meetings

8 September and 27 October. Date to discuss replacement of Treasurer to be arranged (item 4).

Lesley Wilcox

Secretary